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UBER, NATHAN C				
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/560,770

Applicant(s)

TANIMURA ET AL.

Examiner

NATHAN C. UBER

Art Unit

3622

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 8 September 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 31-40 and 53-63 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 31-40 and 53-63 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 53 and 63 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB003)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8 September 2008
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Status of Claims

1. This action is in reply to the amendment filed on 8 September 2008.
2. Claim 31 has been amended.
3. Claims 53-63 have been added.
4. Claims 1-30 have been canceled by applicant's preliminary amendment dated 20 December 2007 have been canceled. Claims 41-52 have been canceled by amendment dated 8 September 2008.
5. Claims 31-40 and 53-63 are currently pending and have been examined.

Information Disclosure Statement

6. The Information Disclosure Statement filed on 8 September 2008 has been considered. An initialed copy of the Form 1449 is enclosed herewith. The two lined-through foreign references submitted by Applicant were not considered because they are not in English, do not contain English language abstracts and were not submitted with accompanying concise explanations of the relevance of the non-English information submitted. See MPEP 609.04(a)(III).

Claim Objections

7. Claim 31 was objected to because of minor informalities. Applicant addressed this objection by amendment, the objection is withdrawn.
8. Claims 53 and 63 are objected to because of the following minor informalities: this is a typo in the *transmitting from a customer side...* limitation; the word 'same' is used where Examiner believes the word 'name' was intended.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

9. Claims 41-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 41-52 were canceled, therefore the rejection is moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

10. Claims 41, 51 and 52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention was directed to non-statutory subject matter. Claims 41, 51 and 52 were cancelled, therefore the rejection is moot.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

11. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

12. **Examiner's Note:** The Examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior art of record within the body of this action for the convenience of the Applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply. Applicant, in preparing the response, should consider fully the entire reference as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.
13. Claims 53-59 and 61-63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Suzuki et al. (U.S. 2003/0078833 A1).

Claims 53 and 63:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitations:

- *reading out a message by a customer side message interface, the message regarding a specified company in a company database, but not including a company database of a system provider, and transmitting the message over the network to customer tables correlated with a salesperson table of the system provider or to customer terminal devices of customer tables extracted according to preset retrieving conditions (see at least Figure 6),*
- *generating a selection registration table by a selection registration section, the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of a company manager of a specified company with a customer who is a source of an acknowledge message from each of the customer terminal devices, when a salesperson side message interface receives the acknowledge message (see at least ¶0061, the selective registration unit accepts MRIDs from user terminals of clients/customers and associated the selected MR with the user and generates a registration table to record the association),*
- *formulating messages by a salesperson side message interface to customers of the customer tables extracted under the preset retrieving conditions, from the customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of company managers, and allowing the messages formulated to be stored in a message database (see at least ¶0062, the MR-side message interface, prepare delete and store messages),*
- *transmitting from a customer side message interface the messages formulated to the customer terminal devices, over the network, in the name of the company managers or in the same (name) of salespersons of the salesperson tables which are different from tables belonging to the company*

managers and which are correlated with the customer tables (see at least Figure 9),

- *transmitting messages formulated from the salesperson side message interface to salesperson terminal devices which are different from the tables belonging to the company managers and which are correlated with the customer tables (see at least Figure 14, item 112).*

Claim 32 and 54:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *the message transmitted to said customer in the name of the company manager or in the names of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers includes a return message to the message from said customer (see at least Figure 8, Item 62).*

Claims 33 and 55:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *said salesperson side message interface makes display so that the messages transmitted/received by said salespersons, directly in charge of said customers, of said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, may be distinguished by said salesperson terminal devices from the messages transmitted received by said company managers (see at least Figure 16).*

Claims 34 and 56:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *said salesperson side message interface allows the salesperson terminal device belonging to said company manager of each company to browse the transmission/receipt hysteresis (list) of messages with said customers of the*

totality of salespersons of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider (see at least Figure 17, Item 17).

Claims 35 and 57:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *said salesperson side message interface provides the salesperson terminal devices with customer-based use data over the network (see at least ¶0115).*

Claims 36 and 58:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *said company databases excepting said company database of said system provider group together a plurality of customer tables out of the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the company managers (see at least ¶Figures 17 and 18).*

Claims 37 and 59:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *having unread message extracting means for extracting unread messages in the name of each company manager or in the name of the salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers (see at least Figure 17, Item 184),*
- *responding customer extracting means of extracting the customers whose messages to the company managers or to salespersons of the salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers have been received within a present time (see at least Figure 16),*
- *customer name extracting means for extracting customers of interest based on all or part of customer names entered as the retrieving conditions (see at least Figure 12),*
- *said retrieving means extracting preset customers by said narrowing-down means and/or said customer name extracting means (see at least Figure 19).*

Claims 39 and 61:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *said customer side message interface displays on said customer terminal device the salespersons of the salesperson tables correlated with the totality of customer tables of the company databases other than the database of said service provider, provided that the salespersons displayed are not approved by said customer (see at least Figure 10).*

Claim 40 and 62:

Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitation:

- *each time a new customer table is added to said salesperson tables different than those belonging to said company managers, said new customer table is added to said totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of said company managers (see at least Figure 3, Item 318 is the customer table).*

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

14. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

15. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.

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4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
16. Claims 31-37, 39 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki et al. (US 2003/0078833 A1) alone. Examiner notes that the rejections for claims 32-37, 39 and 40 are listed above because the claims are substantially the same as the claims 54-59, 61 and 62.

Claims 31:

Suzuki, as show, discloses the following limitations:

- *a plurality of customer databases each adapted for storage therein of a customer table to which private data of a customer has been entered (see at least ¶0061, client database and ¶0083, "...storing them in the client table of the client database..."),*
- *a selection registration section for accepting registration from said customer terminal device of identification data of the salesperson approved by said customer and for generating/holding the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of the salesperson identified by said identification data with said customer table (see at least ¶0061, the selective registration unit accepts MRIDs from user terminals of clients/customers and associated the selected MR with the user and generates a registration table to record the association),*
- *a message database for holding a message sent from said salesperson to said customer and a message sent from said customer to said salesperson (see at least ¶0065, message database, accessible by both the sales person and the client),*
- *retrieving means for retrieving the customer table correlated with said salesperson table by said selection registration table (see at least ¶0062, the MR-side message interface),*

- *a salesperson side message interface for assisting in formulation of a message to said customer by said salesperson terminal device, with generation of said selection registration table as an incentive; said salesperson side message interface also reading out the message formulated by said customer from said message database and sending the message thus read out to said salesperson terminal device (see at least ¶0062, the MR-side message interface),*
- *a customer side message interface for reading out the message prepared by said salesperson from said message database to send the message thus read out to said customer terminal device, and for assisting in formulation of the message by said customer terminal device (see at least ¶0063, client-side message interface),*
- *at least one of the salesperson tables of the company database of said service provider is correlated with the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the totality of said company databases, inclusive of said company database of said system provider, by said selection registration table (see at least Figure 3),*
- *at least one of the salesperson tables of each of the company databases excepting said company database of said system provider is a salesperson table belonging to a manager of each company; the salesperson table of said company manager is correlated with the totality of the customer tables correlated by said selection registration table (see at least ¶0121, a manager managing a plurality of MRs),*
- *said customer side message interface reading out a message concerning a specified one of the companies of said company databases excepting said company database of said system provider from said message database and transmitting the message read out over said network to the totality of*

customer tables correlated with said salesperson table of said service provider or to customer terminal devices of customer tables extracted by said retrieving means subject to preset retrieving conditions (see at least Figure 6),

- *said customer side message interface on receipt of an acknowledge message from each of said customer terminal devices allowing said selection registration section to generate the selection registration table correlating the salesperson table of said company manager of said specified company with the customers of the sources of transmission of said acknowledge messages (see at least Figure 6, Item 33 "management"),*
- *said salesperson side message interface assisting in formulating messages to customers of said customer tables extracted under said preset retrieving conditions by said retrieving means from the totality of customer tables correlated with the salesperson tables of the company managers of said companies, and allowing the messages formulated to be stored in said message database (see at least Figure 14),*
- *said customer side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to said customer terminal devices, over said network, in the name of said company managers or in the name of salespersons of said salesperson tables which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with said customer tables (see at least Figure 9),*
- *said salesperson side message interface transmitting the messages formulated to salesperson terminal devices which are different than those belonging to said company managers and which are correlated with said customer tables (see at least Figure 14),*

With respect to the following limitation, Suzuki, as shown, discloses the following limitations except Suzuki does not specifically disclose a company table. However,

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Suzuki does disclose identifying the company to which and MR belongs and sorting data by company, see at least ¶0056 and Figure 3.

- *a plurality of company databases each adapted for storage therein of a company table of a company, supervising a plurality of salespersons belonging to said company, a plurality of salesperson tables, each provided for each salesperson belonging to said company, and a selection registration table for correlating said customer tables and the salesperson tables to each other (see at least ¶0061, "MR database contains an MR table and a selective registration table"),*

Suzuki does not specifically disclose the following limitation; however the proprietorship of a given database does not affect the scope of the invention.

- *at least one of said company databases is owned by a service provider*

Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to alter the invention of Suzuki to add tables to track companies since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

17. Claims 38 and 60 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Suzuki et al. (US 2003/0078833 A1) in view of **Official Notice**.

Claims 38 and 60:

Suzuki does not specifically disclose the following limitation:

- *said salesperson side message interface performs the processing of refraining from transmitting all messages in case it is unable to transmit the messages to all of said customers simultaneously*

However, Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the art for a messaging system not to send messages that have transmission errors and to report to

the sender which messages had transmission errors and were not sent. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the old and well known message transmission feature of detecting and recording transmission errors with invention of Suzuki since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Response to Arguments

18. Applicant's arguments filed 8 September 2008 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant argues "Suzuki fails to describe that (1) one of the company databases is assigned to (owned by) a service provider, and that (2) a company database is assigned to a customer of the service provider (i.e. a pharmaceutical manufacturing company)... [and] that (3) a sales person table of the company database is correlated with a totality of the customer tables" (see page 14 of Applicant's response). Further Applicant argues (4) "Suzuki fails to disclose an 'acknowledge message'... and "transmitting the messages." All of Applicant's arguments are regarding the independent claims 31, 53 and 63.
19. Regarding Applicant's arguments (1) and (2), as stated in the previous office action, the proprietorship of a database is not a functional limitation that patentably affects the scope of the claim. The limitation 'a database is owned by a service provider' is non-functional descriptive material. For these reasons Examiner has not given the limitation patentable weight. As shown in the rejections above, the Suzuki reference meets all of the functional and structural limitations of the claims. See MPEP 2106 for further guidance on non-functional and functional descriptive material.
20. Regarding Applicant's argument (3), as stated in the rejection above, Suzuki does disclose sales person tables being correlated with customer tables. Suzuki specifically discloses that generating the selective registration table requires "associating the client table with the MR table" (see

¶0061). Examiner interprets the words "associating" and "correlating" to mean the same thing, especially in light of the specification which does not disclose a different definition or explanation of this limitation. Applicant was concerned that Examiner relied on ¶0121 to teach the limitation in question. However, Examiner cited ¶0061 to teach the limitation in an earlier-appearing limitation where the *correlating* limitation first appeared. ¶0121 was relied on to teach limitations regarding management tables. Examiner notes that Examiner points out particular references contained in the prior art of record within the body/context of the claims for the convenience of the Applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply. Applicant, in preparing the response, should consider fully the entire reference as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner. Often, when individual limitations are complex and multifaceted as above, Examiner will not provide repeated citations for limitations that reappear throughout the claims. This is intended to aid Applicant in understanding Examiner's interpretation of unique limitations and of the prior art.

21. Regarding Applicant's argument (4), as shown in the rejections above, Suzuki discloses an invention with the capability of sending/*transmitting* messages. An "acknowledge message" appears in the original claims but is not further disclosed by the specification. Therefore a broad interpretation of "acknowledge message" is appropriate. See MPEP 2111. Examiner relied on any messaging capability or disclosure within the Suzuki reference to teach the "acknowledge message" limitation (see at least ¶0121 for an example of response messages). Many of the *transmitting* limitations were cited with reference to figures in the Suzuki disclosure. The figures show screen shots from various user perspectives. Each of the cited figures discloses a "send" button of some sort which functionally *transmits* the message. As shown in the rejections above, the Suzuki reference meets all of the functional and structural limitations of the claims. See MPEP 2106 for further guidance on non-functional and functional descriptive material.

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22. Regarding Examiners official notice taken to teach claims 38 and 60. The common knowledge or well-known in the art statement is taken to be admitted prior art because applicant did not traverse the examiner's assertion of official notice. MPEP 2144.03(C).

Conclusion

23. Having addressed all of Applicant's arguments, the prior rejections are maintained. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).
24. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

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25. Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or concerning this communication or earlier communications from the Examiner should be directed to **Nathan C Uber** whose telephone number is **571.270.3923**. The Examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:30am-5:00pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's supervisor, **Eric Stamber** can be reached at **571.272.6724**.
26. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://portal.uspto.gov/external/portal/pair> <<http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at **866.217.9197** (toll-free).
27. Any response to this action should be mailed to:

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

or faxed to **571-273-8300**.

28. Hand delivered responses should be brought to the **United States Patent and Trademark Office Customer Service Window**:

Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314.

/Nathan C Uber/ Examiner, Art Unit 3622
21 October 2008

/Arthur Duran/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3622